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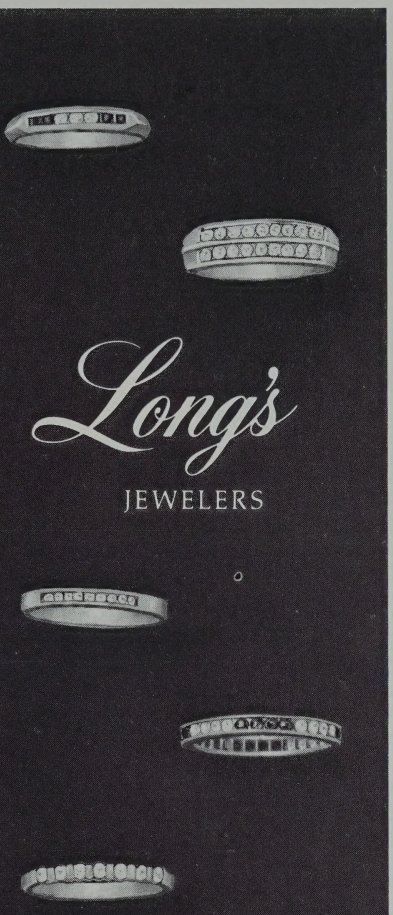
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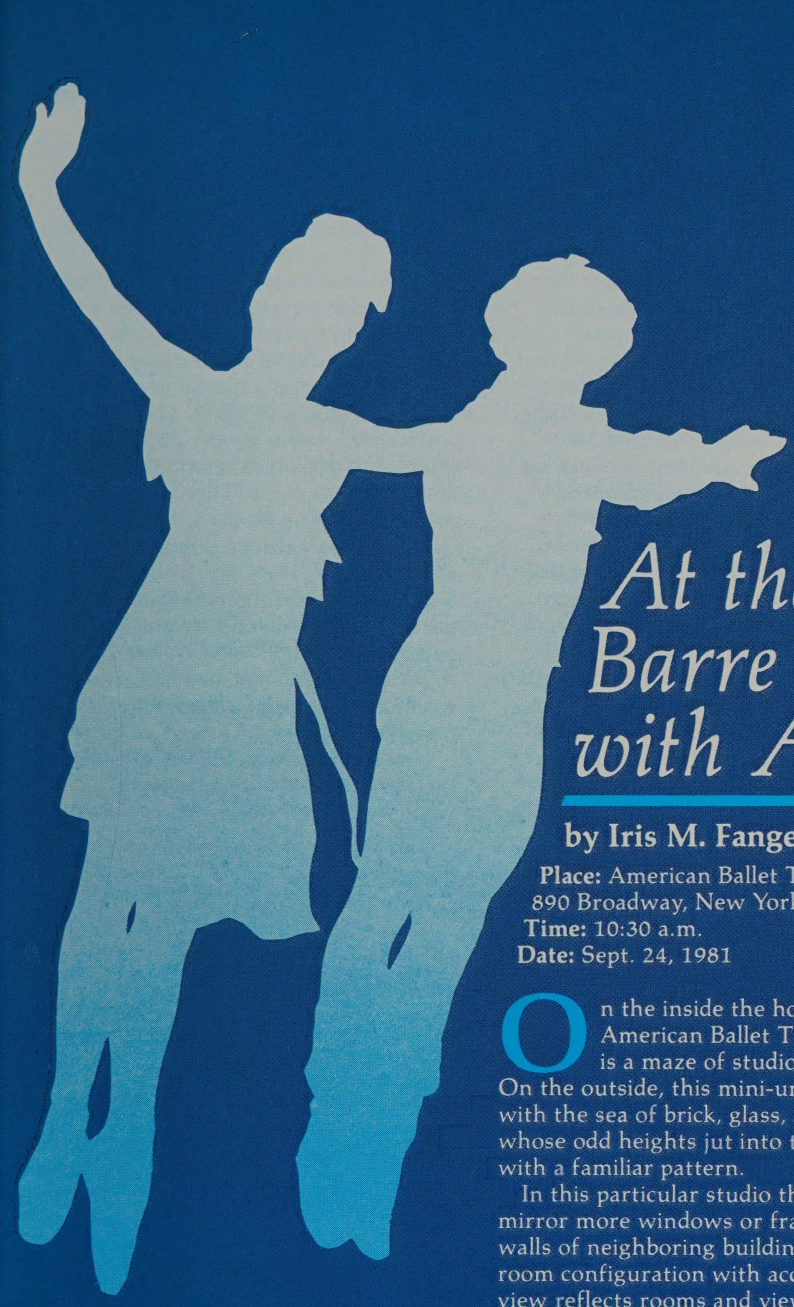


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At the Barre with ABT

by Iris M. Fanger

Place: American Ballet Theatre, 890 Broadway, New York
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Date: Sept. 24, 1981

On the inside the home of the American Ballet Theatre (ABT) is a maze of studios and offices. On the outside, this mini-universe blends with the sea of brick, glass, and metal whose odd heights jut into the cityscape with a familiar pattern.

In this particular studio the windows mirror more windows or frame the brick walls of neighboring buildings. And the room configuration with accompanying view reflects rooms and views of other buildings in the neighborhood — itself a maze of warehouses and various business concerns.

The lights are bright. The room is nearly bare. Mirrors replace pure wall space. And, barres border the walls, a long black edging that will be clung to, and used by the dancers like an extra appendage. The room *must* be simple so the artists can concentrate solely on their bodies, perfecting movements, strengthening muscles.

(Continued)

There are 24 sleepy-eyed men waiting to begin the morning's routine. Among them is Mikhail Baryshnikov, artistic director and principal dancer for ABT. In dancer's "uniform," Baryshnikov is layered with a dark blue tee-shirt under a black leotard and black warm-up tights pulled to his waist. The yellow towel hung around his neck is in anticipation of the effort ahead.

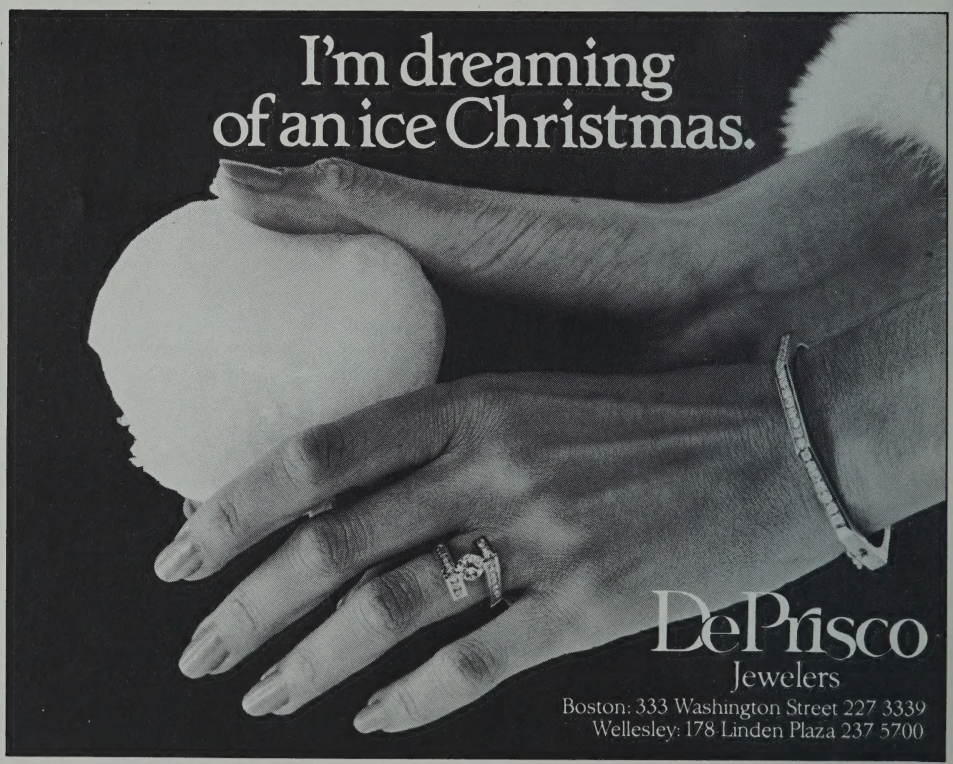
Move up one floor and the scene is the same. Except this time you'll find 30 women stretching at the barres. With no particular unity they rise and dip, and sway and bend, a wave of bodies with mismatched leotards, sweatpants, and ankle warmers. (For the stage, these cocoons of sorts are left behind, and as different as each dancer is from one another, he or she becomes one with this very special dance synergy.) The layered look and the dance world go together. The muscles need warmth; the glitter and fashion come later. The only uniformity here comes in the hairstyle. The hair is swung up, twisted, turned, braided, whatever. It's all pinned UP, exposing the long necks beloved by balletomanes.

The company classes usually are segregated. Men must develop a different set of muscles to support their high jumps; women another set to create the wonderful illusion of near weightlessness.

The work day of ballet companies around the world looks and feels the same as this day at ABT.

After the warm-up period, the dancers practice various combinations in adagio and allegro sections. Then the long day of rehearsal begins. Actually, it is contract-clear that the dancers rehearse no more than six hours each day. But, on performance days, for example, the dancers may rehearse two hours above and beyond performing.

Today Stanley Williams is teaching the women. Forty years ago this stocky, gray-haired man was at the practice barre himself with the Royal Danish Ballet. For the past 25 years he has been on the faculty of the American Ballet Theatre



School and whenever the company is not touring the dancers take class with him.

Time to begin. Instructions for the barre exercises come in traditional ballet shorthand, with Williams using his hands to mark the movements of the feet. If he feels something is not clear, he demonstrates the correct carriage of the shoulders, tilt of the head, and proper position of the arms. The piano accompanist plays as though he and Williams were of one mind. There are no cues, no instructions. With the same natural grace, Chelsea, a dappled cat (the company mascot), patters across the floor and lies near Williams' feet.

You can hear the breathing of the women now. Their chests go in and out. Their cheeks flush. The layers of clothing begin to peel off like onion skin. The dancers stare at their reflections, watching each movement, monitoring their swings, timing, balance, bends, and stretches. And Williams walks about making corrections with hand signals. Forty minutes pass and everyone has developed similar sweat patterns on their shirts, a testimony of sorts to the duplicated postures. When the signal comes for *free* stretching, the dancers flutter and land in pretzel positions.

It is a beautiful sight. These muscled and toned bodies, forgetting the pain and focusing on perfection.

Meanwhile, downstairs in the men's class, the barre exercises are finished. Jurgen Schneider, one of four company ballet masters, is guiding the men through a series of turns and jumps. Artistic director Baryshnikov rates no special treatment other than front row position. His strength and grace, however, draw a spectator's eyes. When the men erupt in a diagonal of *sissones*, the jump where the legs part and return in scissors fashion, Baryshnikov nearly lands in the visitor's lap, politely extends his hand in greeting, and then as though written into the dance, returns to his place in line.

The class ends with multiple *changements*. These jumps in place with the feet



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changing position in the air separate this company from others. You watch four rows of men aloft, bodies placed in splendid ballet technique, and know this can only come from a "world class" company.

At noon there are showers and clothes are changed. Then, Baryshnikov must make another change: he is now artistic director, ready to be interviewed. The first question regards the two full-time positions he holds at ABT. In his British-accented English, he replies simply that he has one job fewer than other directors like Twyla Tharp and Merce Cunningham. "They dance, direct a company, and choreograph. I am not a choreographer." Of course there is a difference. His company *is* four times the size of the others, and he is responsible for staging full-length works like *Don Quixote* and *The Nutcracker.*

He discussed the most noticeable change at the company since he became artistic director last year. "We have a lot of young dancers . . .

"One half of the repertory is in the arms, legs, and bodies of very young dancers. They are taking the roles next to the leading dancers. Each year somebody else is coming up," he added, making a gesture with his finger of a corkscrew moving up in the air.

He noted that there were many auditions this year, with dancers coming from all over the country, including the American Ballet Theatre School, Stanley Holden's classes in Los Angeles, and ABT II (Ballet Repertory Company, the second company at ABT).

"I'm not changing anything in the company [in terms of repertory]," he said. "Lucia Chase [former ABT director] left the company in good shape. ABT has many ballets in different styles. That is the tradition of Ballet Theatre."

Baryshnikov enumerated the number of new ballets in rehearsal by Choo San Goh, Kenneth MacMillan, Lynne Taylor-Corbett, and a revival of *Bourree Fantasque* choreographed in 1949 by George Balanchine. These ballets will be premiered in Washington, D.C., during the December run at Kennedy Center. Baryshnikov will create leading roles in Goh's and MacMillan's works. In



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addition, Antony Tudor is staging a revival of his 1942 ballet, *Pillar of Fire*, and Merce Cunningham is setting a work on the company.

When asked about the rumored film biography of James Cagney with Baryshnikov in the leading role, Baryshnikov replied that he hoped to play Cagney some day, but the script is not finished. (Baryshnikov has turned down many screenplays since his success in *The Turning Point*, including the leading role in the film *Nijinsky*.) "I adore Jimmy Cagney. He is a fantastic person. I have visited him at his home in upstate New York." Baryshnikov first saw American films at the cinema in his hometown of Riga, with stars such as Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire, and Cagney, who had a special appeal because he was both a dancer and a tough guy.

At the end of the interview, the discussion turns again to Baryshnikov's dual commitment to ABT. His typical day at the studio runs nine to ten hours and he expressed a wish that the dancers could work that long as well. Then he smiled and shrugged as he said that he could watch them that long. When asked about his relationship with the dancers, especially since he takes class with them, he replied, "Some days I'm not all together. I'm tired as they are. I'm sore. I have my physical problems. I am one of them. I try to forget that I'm running the joint." Does he think that the dancers forget that? "I hope not!"

From 12:30 until nearly 8:00 p.m. every day rehearsals are scheduled in each of the six studios. There is a full-cast run through of *Bourree Fantasque* in one studio under the watchful eyes of Regisseur General Richard Tanner and Baryshnikov, a beginning rehearsal with Tudor in another, and Alexander Godunov and Cynthia Gregory practicing *Swan Lake* in a third. Baryshnikov takes a break during the *Bourree Fantasque* rehearsal to sit at the piano, relax, and play some Chopin. Then he changes back into leotard and tights for work with MacMillan on the solo in *The Wild Boy* and Goh's new



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piece. Later, Baryshnikov is glimpsed through an office window. He stands, dressed in tights, deep in discussion with two of his administrative assistants. During the day other dancers, draped across the folding chairs which edge the studio walls, alternately rehearse or watch the studio activity. One dancer rests her foot on an ice pack as she nurses a pulled muscle, but then tugs on her toe shoe in time for her cue.

Days such as this one continued at 890 Broadway until the first week in October when the ABT dancers left for Minneapolis, first stop on their six-week fall tour which continued to Detroit, Atlanta, and Boston. On tour the dancers begin each day with company class, then rehearse, and perform in the evenings. When asked if travel is difficult, Baryshnikov said, "Travel from East Coast to West is like taking a bath. You arrive, perform, then leave."

Travel is a fact of life for members of many ballet companies. ABT will continue its tour to the West Coast after the first of the year. The Royal Danish Ballet will come to the United States in the late spring and The Boston Ballet's last stop before the 1981 fall season at home was London. Travel itineraries are as common as toe shoes in ballet bags.

Another bond in all dance companies is the continuity between generations. At ABT, former ballerina Patricia Wilde was coaching principal dancer Megali Messac in the intricacies of snapping a fan in *Bourree Fantasque* which Wilde had performed at New York City Ballet under Balanchine. At The Boston Ballet recently, a similar scene could be viewed as Violette Verdy instructed the various Giselles in the role which Verdy had perfected.

If that is ballet past, and Baryshnikov is ballet present, then the future must be the small boy dressed in practice clothes watching at the door of one of the ABT rehearsals. On his way to his ballet class at the ABT School, and perhaps on his way to future stardom, he stood quietly, as if waiting his turn in the wings.

THE SEARCH FOR ALEXANDER

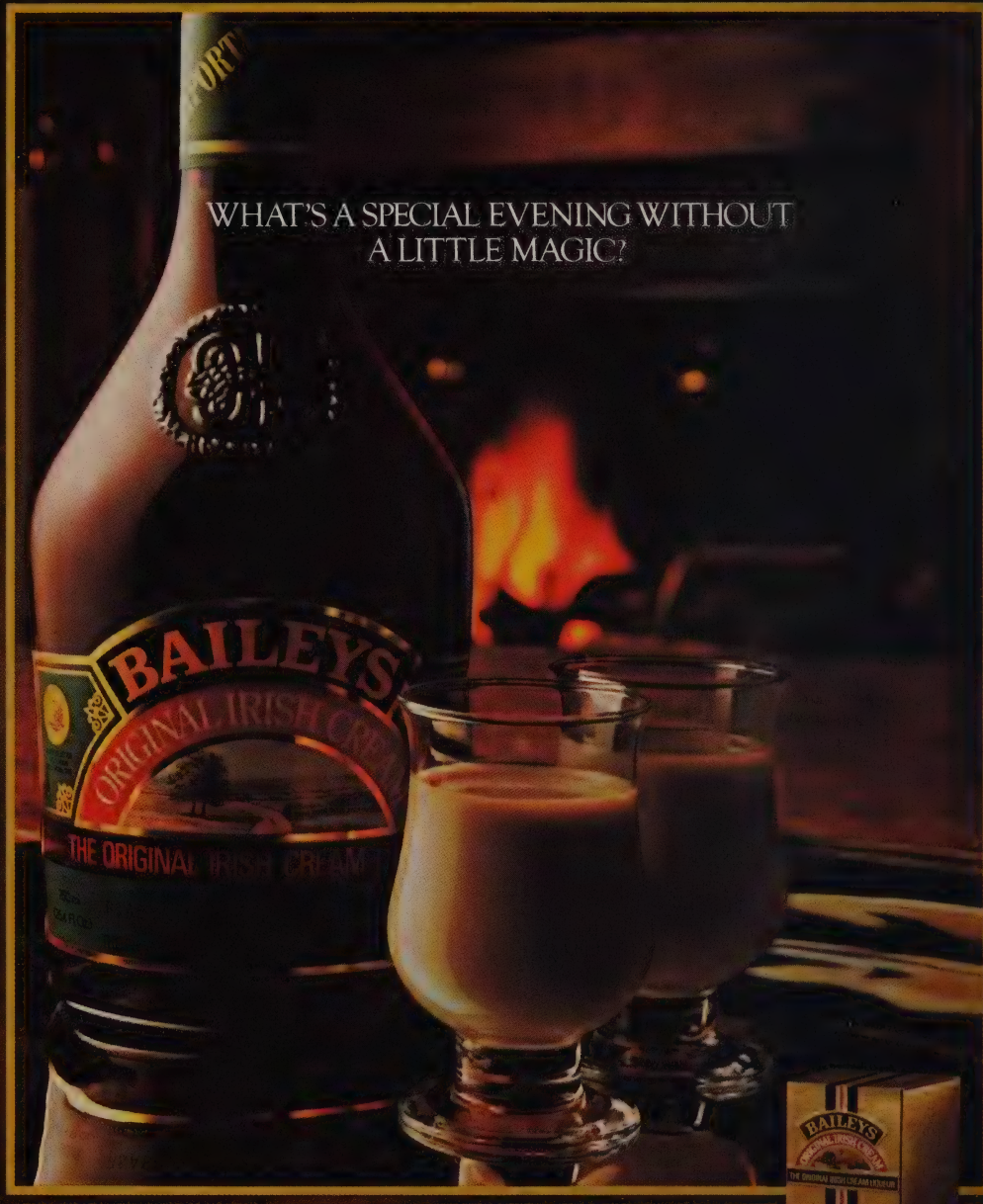


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Bette Davis, from her own scrapbook now owned by Boston University. (BU Special Collections)

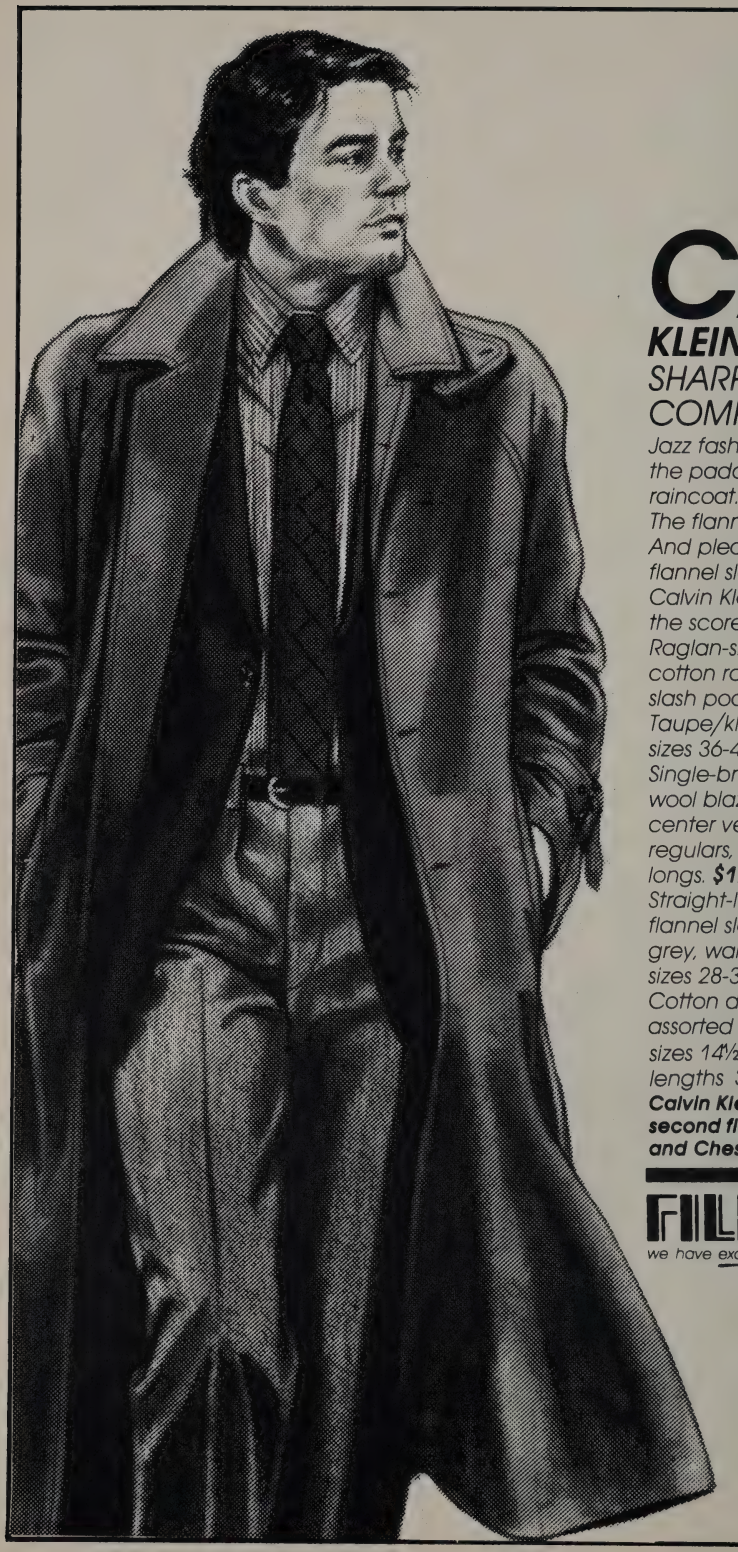
by Susan Bonchi

• *Sifting through papers and theatrical memorabilia, researchers at Boston University (BU) discovered that Fred Astaire autographs every pair of shoes he wears for dancing, and that Gene Kelly, unlike other choreographers, sketches his dance steps on paper before staging them. This information wasn't buried deep in some tome on the theater; Astaire's shoes and Kelly's sketches are just a small part of BU's vast — and growing — theater archives.*

• *Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., had been shuttered for more than 100 years when the National Park Service decided to restore it in the late 1960s. But the site of Abraham Lincoln's assassination had deteriorated, and the Park Service couldn't find any original designs to help them recreate the theater authentically. Then, a call to the Harvard Theatre Collection at Harvard University netted the Park Service a unique original print of the floor plans, which they used to successfully complete the restoration.*

• *While working in the stacks of the Boston Public Library (BPL), a young employee*

(Continued on page 34)



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Sheldon Shkolnik, *piano*
Edward Carroll, *trumpet*
Thomas Dunn, *conducting*

Franz Joseph Haydn

Piano Concerto in D, Hob. xviii:11
Vivace
Un poco Adagio
Rondo all'Ungherese
Mr. Shkolnik

Trumpet Concerto in E-flat, Hob. viie:1
Allegro
Andante cantabile
Finale (Allegro)
Mr. Carroll

Intermission

Dmitri Shostakovich

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 35
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Lento
Moderato
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Notes
by Joseph Dyer

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) composed the Concerto in D major for Piano and Orchestra, Hob. xviii:11, sometime in the early 1780s, contemporaneous with the Cello Concerto in the same key. Most of his other concertos for keyboard and various orchestral instruments date from the 1760s, during his first decade of service at the Esterházy court. After an initial exploration of the court orchestra's virtuosity, Haydn concentrated on symphonies, operas, and chamber music. He had little interest in virtuosity for its own sake, and the princely taste dictated his output to a certain extent.

By the time the D-major Concerto appeared in print (1784), Haydn had switched from the harpsichord to the piano for his solo keyboard music. Hence, a performance on either instrument is appropriate. Mention of the harpsichord on the title page of a printed edition helped to boost sales, even if the piano was intended. The orchestra required for the Concerto is the standard classic ensemble: strings with pairs of oboes and horns. In accordance with eighteenth-century performing practice, a bassoon will be heard in tonight's performance to reinforce the bass line.

More than two decades later, with all of his great symphonic triumphs behind him, Haydn called for a more sumptuous orchestral complement in the Trumpet Concerto, Hob. viie:1. With this concerto, Haydn bade farewell to purely orchestral music, and initiated at about the same time the brilliant series of late Masses and oratorios. The Trumpet Concerto was written for the Viennese court



trumpeter, Anton Weidinger, who needed a vehicle to show off his keyed trumpet. This instrument permitted a continuous scale throughout its compass by means of three or four keys which vented the tubing at acoustically appropriate places. Haydn could thus exploit both the traditional fanfare motifs and the new lyrical potential which would become the trumpet's own after the introduction of valves in the early nineteenth century. Weidinger introduced the Concerto at a benefit concert in 1800. He seems to have had excellent taste: most of the music on the program was by either Haydn or Mozart. Both the piano and the trumpet concertos are in the traditional three movements.

Dmitri Shostakovich completed his first Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in 1933. It proclaims a very facile talent, never at a loss for an idea, even an idea (as in the last movement) which belongs to someone else! The composer's materials encompass the grand Romantic manner, muted sentiment and satiric irreverance with equal ease. One is never certain which mask will pop up next. There are four movements to the concerto, but the third is essentially an extended recitative or cadenza which acts as a bridge to the scintillating finale. This last movement is a tune-spotter's paradise of themes from the classics to the repertoire of the music hall, tumbling after one another with lightning speed. Particularly in this movement the solo trumpet vies with the piano. When Shostakovich performed the Concerto himself, he placed the trumpet in front of the string orchestra and near the piano, just as in tonight's performance.

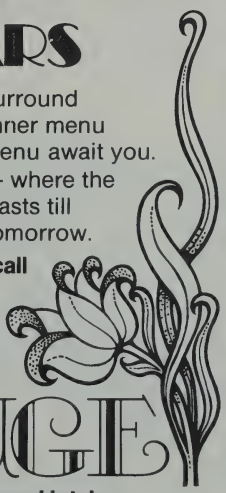
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Thomas Dunn *Artistic Director*
Of Thomas Dunn's work it has been said it is a mixture of ivory tower and theater. He has incensed *The New York Times* by performing Bach's B-Minor Mass with the same number of singers and players Bach himself used, and he has not hesitated to send an ensemble of beagles on stage at Avery Fisher Hall for the performance of a Hunting Symphony by Leopold Mozart. Mr. Dunn is a graduate of Johns Hopkins University, the Peabody Conservatory of Music, and Harvard University, and as a Fulbright Scholar in Amsterdam was the first American to be awarded the Diploma in Orchestral Conducting, The Netherlands' highest award in music. He has been an organist, church music director, college professor, and editor. Appointed Artistic Director of the Handel & Haydn Society in 1967, Mr. Dunn has been a vital force in Boston's musical life since his inaugural concerts in December of that year, when he gave Boston its first hearing of Mozart's edition of Handel's *Messiah*.

Gerald Tarack *Concertmaster*
Violinist Gerald Tarack has carved out for himself an unusual career as a freelance concertmaster. He plays on a regular basis with the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, the Symphony of the New World, Clarion Concerts, and the Bach Aria Group. He is music director of the Tarack Chamber Ensemble, a group of 15 musicians who perform without a conductor. Appearances with many different classical chamber orchestras are mixed with dates in the pop recording studio. His unique specialty is in such demand that bookings

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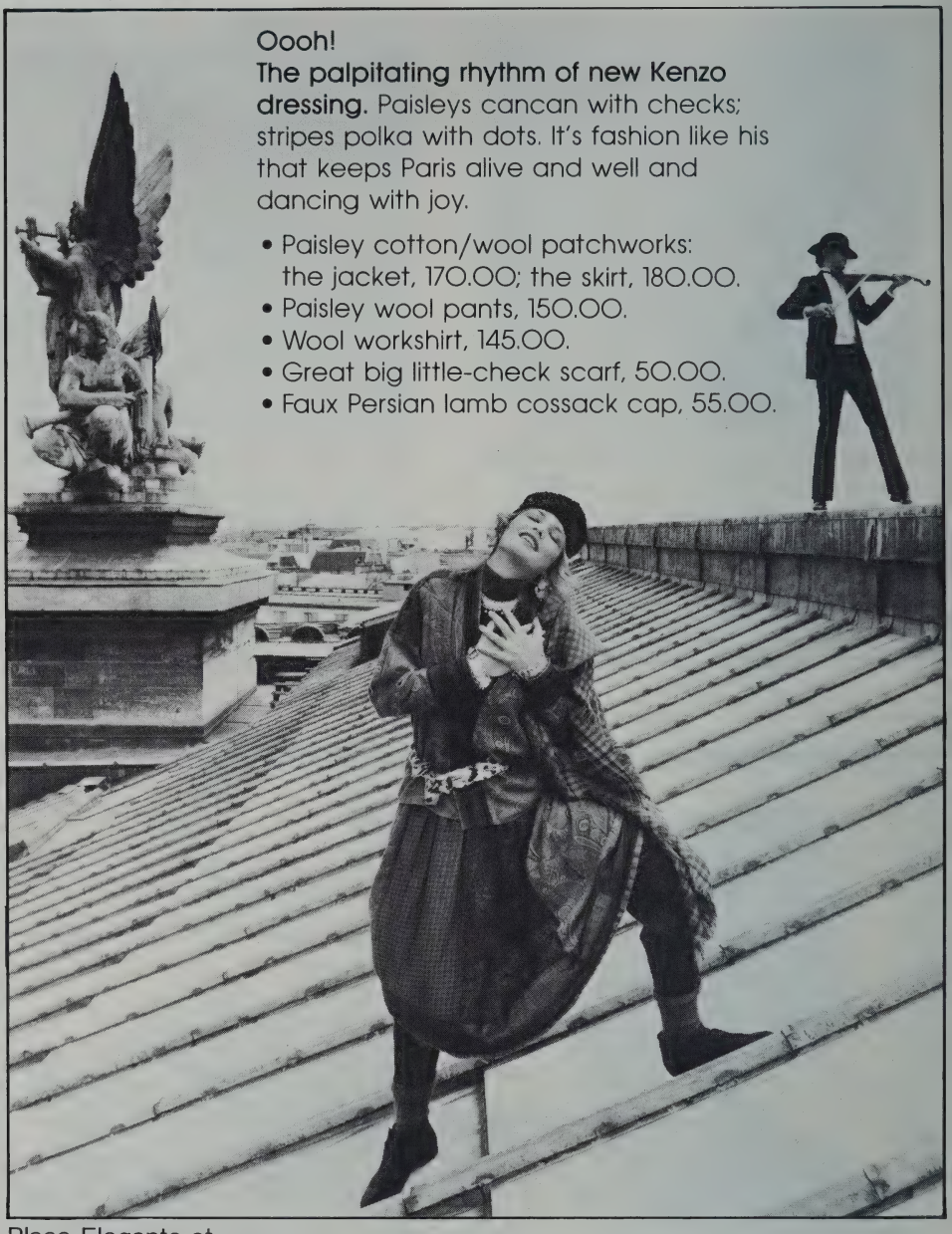
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often stretch out a year in advance. Several dance companies, including the Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre, depend on him to assemble the best professional musicians in New York for their performances. Mr. Tarack has toured Europe, the Far East, and the Soviet Union. As a soloist he has recorded the Hindemith unaccompanied Sonata (Nonesuch), Sonatas of Ravel and Poulenc (Sine Qua Non), and music of Schubert (Vanguard).

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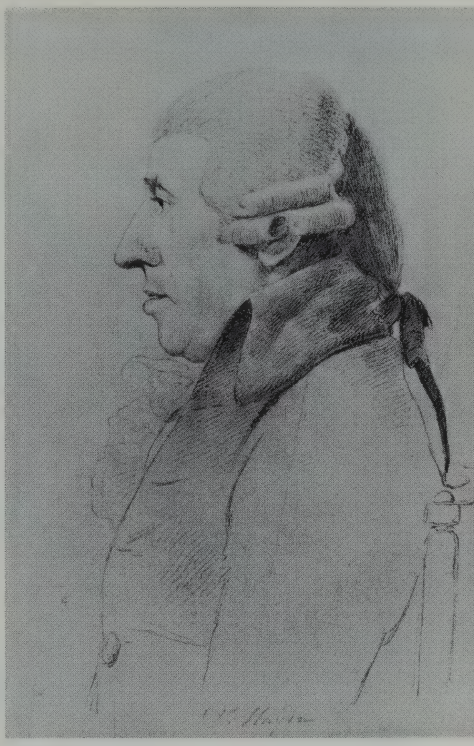
Oboe
Peggy Pearson
Barbara Knapp

Bassoon
Francis Nizzari
Ronald Haroutunian

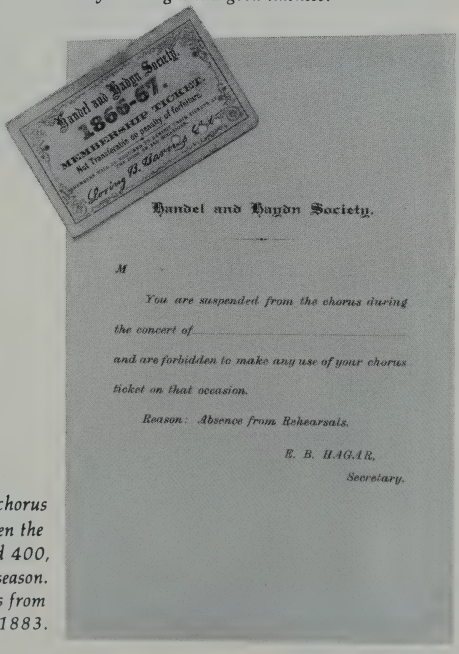
Horn
Sylvia Alimena
John Cox

Trumpet
John Schnell
Randell Croley

Timpani
Frederick Buda



A pencil sketch of Joseph Haydn by George Dance, made during the composer's second visit to London (1794). Haydn thought it a good likeness.



A special ticket for chorus members was needed when the number of voices exceeded 400, as it did in the 1866–67 season. The suspension notice dates from sometime after 1883.

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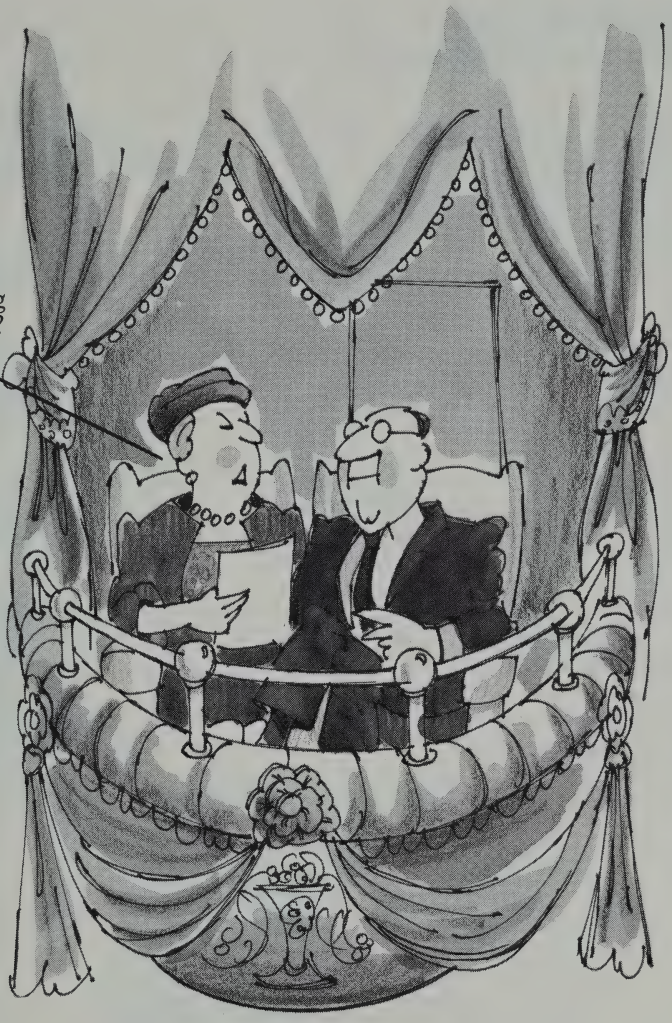
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Handel & Haydn Historical Highlights

March 24, 1815:
the Handel and Haydn Society is founded "to promote the love of good music and a better performance of it"

December 25, 1815:
first public concert given at King's Chapel

February 9, 1816:
the Society is incorporated by a Special Act of the General Court, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

July 15, 1817:
the Society Chorus is invited to perform for President James Monroe ("President Monroe's March" is commissioned for the occasion)

April 1, 3, 4, 1818:
first complete performance of Handel's "Messiah" in America

February 16, 1819:
first complete Boston performance of Haydn's "Creation" (second in America)

1821:
publication of the first Handel and Haydn Society music collection

1823:
Beethoven is commissioned to compose a work for the Society (but dies before being able to begin)

August 2, 1826:
the Society Chorus performs at memorial services for John Adams and Thomas Jefferson held in Faneuil Hall — Daniel Webster, orator

September 3, 1827:
Lowell Mason, noted music educator and editor, is elected President of the Society

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1830:
the Society Chorus performs for the 200th anniversary celebration of the settling of Boston

June 23, 1833:
the Society gives a benefit concert to aid in completion of the Bunker Hill Monument

April 20, 1841:
performance at the funeral of William Henry Harrison, late President of the United States

January 22, 1843:
first H&H performance of Mendelssohn's "St. Paul"

February 26, 1843:
first performance of Rossini's "Stabat Mater"

June, 1844:
performance for President John Tyler

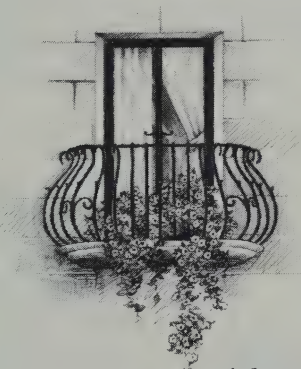
January 26, 1845:
first American performance of Handel's "Samson"

December 15, 1847:
first H&H performance of Handel's "Judas Maccabaeus"

February 13, 1848:
first Boston performance of Mendelssohn's "Elijah"

April 15, 1848:
performance at memorial services for John Quincy Adams at Faneuil Hall — Edward Everett, eulogist

November 20, 1852:
the Society Chorus performs for the ded-



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November 30, 1852:
performance at memorial services for Daniel Webster

April 2, 1853:
first Boston performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony

1853:
Charles C. Perkins, one of the original corporators of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, is elected President of the Society

November 15, 1855:
first American performance of Handel's "Solomon"

November 28, 1863:
the Society Chorus performs at inauguration of the Great Organ, Boston Music Hall

January 1, 1864:
the Society Chorus performs for the Emancipation Proclamation celebration (Julia Ward Howe, composer of "Battle Hymn of the Republic," is a member of the Chorus) — Ralph Waldo Emerson, orator

1864:
the Handel and Haydn Society is acknowledged as Boston's leading musical institution and one of the world's most significant performing organizations by critics, newspapers and other institutions across the country

June 1, 1865:
the Society Chorus performs at the memorial services for President Lincoln

June 16, 1870:
New York City invites the Society to participate in the Beethoven Centennial; 500 Chorus members take part

December 10, 1871:
the Chorus performs for Grand Duke Alexis of Russia

June 14–July 4, 1872:
the Chorus performs for the World Peace Jubilee

April 22–26, 1873:
the Society presents a series of concerts in New York City

May 17, 1877:
first American performance of Parts I & II of J.S. Bach's "Christmas Oratorio"

May 5, 1878:
first American performance of Verdi's "Requiem" in memory of Manzoni

April 11, 1879:
first complete American performance of J.S. Bach's "St. Matthew Passion"

1881:
H&H associate member and trustee Henry Lee Higginson founds the Boston Symphony Orchestra

May 27, 1883:
the Society gives a benefit concert to aid Russian Jews fleeing czarist oppression

February 27, 1887:
first American performance of selections from J.S. Bach's "Mass in B minor"

January 1, 1900:
the Chorus performs at special services ushering in the new century at the State House, Boston

October 21, 1900:
first H&H concert in the new Symphony Hall

April 13, 1904:
the Chorus performs with the BSO under Wilhelm Gericke to raise funds for the orchestra's Pension Fund

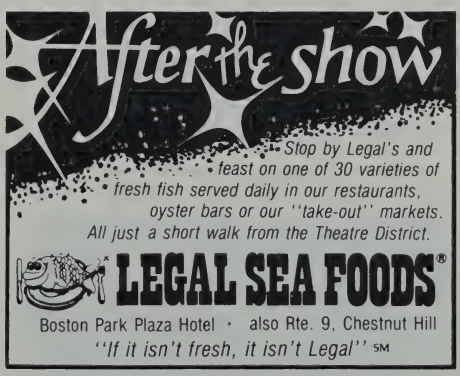
1904:
the Chorus performs at the opening exercises of the International Peace Conference

December 18, 19, 1927:
the Chorus performs with the BSO under Koussevitsky to raise funds for the orchestra's Pension Fund

April 6, 1930:
first Boston performance of Kodaly's "Psalmus Hungaricus"



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April 10, 1932:
first Boston performances of W.F. Bach's "Lasset uns Ablegen," Syzmanowski's "Stabat Mater," and Kaminski's "Magnificat"

April 29, 1945:
the Chorus performs at memorial services for President Franklin Roosevelt at Symphony Hall

October 29, 1955:
the Society makes its first recording, "Messiah"

1961:
the Society receives the first invitation ever extended to any group outside England to participate in the Three Choirs Festival (but is regretfully unable to accept)

1961:
the Chorus appears on television for the first time for the award-winning series 'Accent on Music'

October, 1961:
the Society contributes concert income to aid in the reconstruction of WGBH studios



Thomas S. Webb (1771–1819), first president of the Handel & Haydn Society. The demands of business forced Col. Webb to resign in 1817, at which time the other officers expressed their esteem for his "gentlemanly manners and refined musical taste."

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Charles Bressler, *tenor*
Sanford Sylvan, *baritone*
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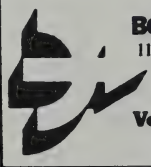
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Hidden Theatrical Treasures

(Continued from page 15)

named John Sullivan taught himself to juggle in order to amuse his coworkers. Though he soon left the library for a show business career, Sullivan always remembered where he got his start. He died in 1956, and 20 years later, the library received all of his papers and scripts. It was a valuable acquisition, because along the way Sullivan had become a star named Fred Allen.

These special collections at BU, Harvard, and the BPL are by far the most extensive in the area, and they represent a little-known but immensely valuable aspect of the theater. Not only do scholars study the material for academic research, but contemporary authors, actors, designers, and playwrights often use it for work which will be seen on stage, in films, or in books. Last year, for example, a costume designer from the Opera Company of Boston researched period costumes at the BPL for one of the company's new productions. Harvard visitors in the past few years have included actress Jane Alexander when she was preparing to portray Calamity Jane for PBS, and an actor planning a one-man show on the life of John Barrymore.

Just a few of the many popular books containing pictures from Harvard's huge selection include a recent biography of Vivien Leigh, Margot Fonteyn's history of ballet, and Rex Harrison's autobiography. Robert Toll used 150 Harvard-owned photographs in his story of entertainment, *On With the Show.*

Harvard Theatre Collection

Part of the Harvard University Library, the Harvard Theatre Collection turns 80 on November 19, making it the oldest one of its kind in the world. Curator Jeanne T. Newlin has planned a series of

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celebrations and exhibits in honor of the anniversary; the first, "80 Great Treasures from the Collection," will be on display at the Theatre Collection in Pusey Library from Nov. 21.

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library to acquire non-book material when Harvard professor George Pierce Baker organized the collection in 1901. Baker's assemblage that began modestly with some portraits of British actor



One of the first known renderings of a stage performance, from Harvard's 1493 edition of Terence. (Harvard Theatre Collection)



Charlotte Cushman as Romeo and her sister Susan as Juliet, circa 1852. (Harvard Theatre Collection)

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Just Across the Street

David Garrick eventually became one of the largest and most renown theater groupings in the world.

Its focus is the "history of performance," especially the English and American stage and the history of dance. Holdings include a rare 1493 edition of works by the Roman playwright Terence, which contains the first known woodcuts of a stage performance; Eugene O'Neill's early manuscripts; and 30,000 glass negatives of photographs by Angus McBean of actors at England's Old Vic and Stratford-Upon-Avon from 1937 to 1964. There are also countless theater programs from Boston and New York, as well as many from around the country and England; in all, more than three million. In fact, in some cases Harvard has a wider variety of historical programs from the English provinces than does England itself.

"Almost any book of major theatrical scholarship starts here," says Martha Mahard, assistant curator of the collection. Besides original manuscripts, books, journals, and newsclippings, Harvard has about 500,000 photographs, 250,000 engraved portraits and scenes, 15,000 scenery and costume designs, and nearly 5,000 promptbooks. Interestingly enough, Mahard says that their 18th-century programs and papers are in better condition than those from the 19th century because the higher rag content in the earlier paper improved its quality.

Boston University

Before outlawing the practice in 1969, the government allowed tax exemptions to those who donated their personal papers to libraries. But people still contribute their documents today, for reasons like future scholarship and safekeeping, according to Dr. Howard Gotlieb, Director of Special Collections at BU.

Sometimes, though, donors place restrictions on access to their gifts. BU owns Robert Redford's diaries, for instance, but no one can read them until Redford says otherwise, which could be years after his death. Similarly, the Fred Allen radio scripts at the BPL have been under lock and key since their arrival in 1976, and

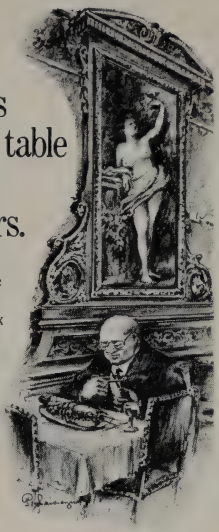

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BU's collection, one of 900 special groups in the school's 20th-century archives, has been in existence for just 15 years. In that time, it has amassed a stunning array of manuscripts, notebooks, photographs, diaries, scrapbooks, and programs — "everything they [donors] have saved," says Gotlieb — relating to 20th-century entertainment.

Just a small sampling of the artists whose papers — letters, diaries, scripts, etc. — BU owns reads like a page from *Variety:* performers Fred and Adele



Astaire, Bette Davis, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Brooke Hayward, Joan Fontaine, Glenda Jackson, Gene Kelly, Angela Lansbury, Roddy McDowell, Claude Rains, Basil Rathbone; playwrights Mary Haley Bell, Everett Chambers, Helen Deutsch, Simon Gray, John Lahr, Frank Marcus, Arthur Marx, Sam Shepard; producers Jesse Lasky, Herbert Ross, Irene Mayer Selznick.

"If their papers reflect the growth of the theater and film industries, that is the criterion [for acquiring them]," explains Gotlieb. "And, if they will have interest 50 or 100 years from now."

While Gotlieb won't point to any one set of papers as being the archives' most

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important, he does say that Bette Davis' have special meaning because he spent 10 years trying to get them. BU has "everything relating to her life and career," Gotlieb continues, including scripts, correspondence, journals, scrapbooks, and even the timeclock she punched on her first Broadway show. Once she became famous she hunted for it and kept it as a reminder, presumably, of the early days.

Boston Public Library

The BPL, considered one of the top 10 research libraries in the country, has two areas of theater information. The general theater collection in the research stacks contains a wide spectrum of books and directories on the American theater, as well as many on British and Irish theater. Their rare book department houses valuable, one-of-a-kind papers, letters, photographs, and manuscripts, as well as books. The Allen A. Brown collection is the richest grouping here, according to Keeper of Rare Books Laura Monti. This contains Americana and programs, scrapbooks, letters, and photographs of Boston theater from 1835 to 1894. The Brown Collection also includes a renown music section which attracts scholars from around the world, Monti adds.

Besides the scripts from his radio shows, the library's Fred Allen Collection includes photographs, letters, and Allen's personal library. Their Cushman Collection contains everything relating to Boston-born actress Charlotte Cushman, popular during the mid-19th century, as well as some non-Cushman theater memorabilia. When the commemorative Cushman Society disbanded in 1973, its officers voted to give all their holdings to the BPL, along with the $90,000 left in their treasury.

The Jackson Collection completes the library's major theatrical holdings. This is a comprehensive set of 40 years of contemporary Boston theater programs left in 1978 by an usher who had worked at the Wilbur Theatre. Although these could be an inexhaustible research tool, they are unavailable for use right now because of a problem common to all libraries. Increased costs have made the cataloguing of some gifts prohibitive. The BPL would like to computerize all the

material in the Jackson programs — performers, playwrights, directors, etc. — but cannot even set a timetable for the job because of the cost. One result, according to library representatives, is that not all of their material is indexed. So, the clearer the idea researchers have of their project, the easier it will be to accommodate them.

While the material in all three archives overlaps to some degree, each has its own focus. Harvard's emphasis is historical; BU concentrates on personal papers from the 20th century; and the BPL terms its holdings "Americana." While the collections aren't restricted to scholars or those connected with the theater, all three institutions ask that patrons have a legitimate research project.

Sometimes these collections can be of unimaginable value. A 1919 *New York Clipper* article tells of Frank Dumont's gift of minstrel playbills and posters to Harvard upon his death that year. The account explained that Dumont, a singer, had searched in vain for a program from his very first performance. Just before he died, though, he heard that Harvard had acquired one. After much pleading, and with the promise that he would have it returned to Harvard upon his death, the university gave Dumont the program less than a week before he died. In return for this kindness, Dumont not only instructed that the program be returned to Harvard, but also that his entire collection, considered to be the best group of minstrel programs in existence, go with it.



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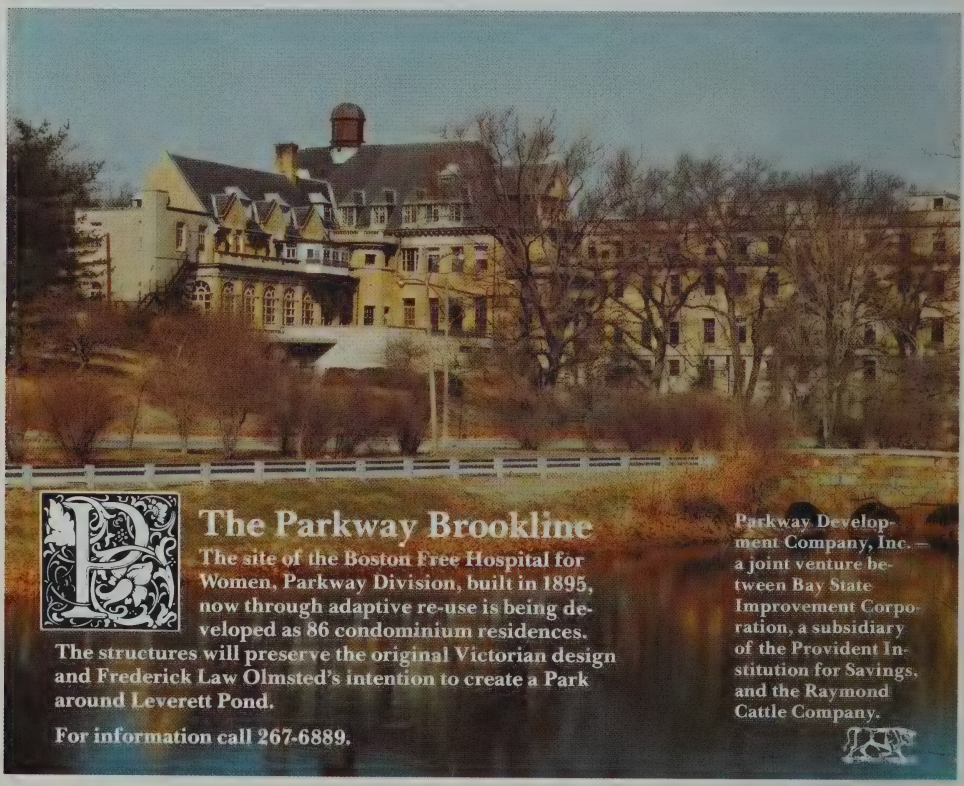
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